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FOOD FOR THE WORLD

Must China and India, with their combined population of 890 millions straining at the limits of food resources, always live perilously close to the borderline of famine?

Can new sources of food supply be developed, particularly in Latin America?

How long will the major food relief burden rest on the United States? In what direction are longer-term forces moving us in food production and use?

These are questions which Chester C. Davis, Chairman of the President's Famine Emergency Committee, sees in the long-range aspects of the world food problem. They leave untouched, he adds, a question of perhaps greater immediate importance — how soon will Europe regain prewar status in food production?

With this war's greater legacy of weakness; of uprooted peoples; of destruction of human and animal life, machines, transportation, factories, and seed stocks; the process of recovery will be slower than after World War I, Mr. Davis predicts. But restoration of farm production will have priority. Shipments of food from the U. S. to Europe will diminish as rapidly as Europe can replace them with food grown at home or purchased by barter elsewhere.

The United States and other nations with relative abundance can help moderate the effects of recurrent disasters in lands where hunger, pestilence, and war remain the major controls of population growth. But large imports of food, even though maintained indefinitely, would work no permanent cure. Unless basic changes are made, Mr. Davis believes that the population would merely increase to absorb the new supplies.

To raise the level of living and to have a margin of safety from famine, these countries must develop a far-reaching, integrated program of modernization, in which eventually the individual human being will assume dignity and importance.

Thus, the immediate interest of the United States lies in the direction of modernization of backward peoples. It is also in the long-time interest of this Nation to help Latin America and other areas of the earth increase their potential food production. This we can do through supplying the know-how in producing, storing, transporting, and processing food — all through intelligently directed, integrated international cooperation.

The demand, at home and abroad, will be for more food than we can possibly produce in 1946, Mr. Davis believes. Next year the needs will still be great, but the American farmer should be able to pay more attention to soil protection and restoration than was possible during the war.

Fuller use of the world's food resources will come only as the world progresses in cooperation and organization. "Cooperation" must be practiced eternally and with ceaseless vigilance if civilized and organized institutions of mankind are to be saved from destruction.

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FAO CONFERENCE OPENS

King Christian of Denmark formally opened the conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at Copenhagen on September 2. N. E. Dodd, Under Secretary of Agriculture, heads the United States delegation and is also on the general committee of the conference.

Henrik Kauffman, Danish Minister to the United States, was elected chairman of the conference.

Major considerations will be the proposal for a World Food Board and the appraisal of the world food situation.

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WHEAT SITUATION TIGHT FOR 1946-47

Although farmers are harvesting a record wheat crop this year, total U. S. wheat supplies for the current marketing year (1946-47) will be below each of the past 5 years. The July 1 carryover was the smallest in 20 years.

Total domestic consumption will run around 710 million bushels, leaving 550 million for export and carry-over, according to the latest wheat summary of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Preliminary figures indicate that 1946-47 wheat exports will be around 275 million bushels compared with slightly less than 400 million for 1945-46. Corn and corn products will supply a major part of the increased grain exports announced August 23. The grain export goal set up at that time is 400 million bushels, compared with a former goal of 250 million bushels of wheat and flour alone.

BAE notes that world wheat production for this year is estimated at least 10 percent above last year. Biggest gains are in western Europe and throughout the Mediterranean area.

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ENGLAND'S POSTWAR FOOD RATIONING

Even in these postwar days, the British housewife queues for everything from food to bus rides, reports Mrs. Helendeen Dodderidge of PMA Information Service, who recently visited England and other European countries.

After eating the monotonous meals served in the best, the mediocre, and the least expensive cafes in England, she decided to see for herself why, no matter where one ate, there was only a choice of thick dehydrated bean or potato soup or a sort of hors d'oeuvre composed of badly seasoned potato salad, a few pieces of diced beet root, a bit of unattractive fish; followed by an entree of more fish or a meat pie (largely pie), boiled potatoes, boiled cabbage, dark bread (upon request); and a sweet which really wasn't sweet. All drinks were served at additional cost, and the diner, who was never served water, was practically forced to order cider, ale, or one of those lemon or orange squash drinks.

With her emergency ration card in hand, Mrs. Dodderidge queued to have coupons clipped from the card and exchanged for shopping coupons. She bought her small allotment of fat, margarine and butter, sugar, cheese, and meat.

Attempting to select unrationed vegetables and fruits, she soon discovered why only cabbage, potatoes, and probably a bit of cauliflower were on every menu. These vegetables were the only ones the average housewife could afford. Shelves were loaded with green peas, beans, (ranging from 4 to 6 shillings a pound -- approximately 80 cents to \$1); asparagus at \$3.50 a bunch; and other vegetables either imported or hothouse grown at comparable prices.

Fruits were even higher, which is why children born and reared during the war years were totally unfamiliar with some of them. A pound bunch of grapes sold for \$40, and later for \$20. An occasional orange or citrus concentrates were the only fruits generally included in the diet. In some homes, fresh vegetables, some strawberries, a few cherries, and even Damson plums are served, but these are usually grown in the hot houses of estates.

That the women of the British Isles are surfeited with rationing was indicated by their stormy protests against bread rationing, started the latter part of July. Yet they were so accustomed to regulations and restrictions that they were soon queueing patiently for bread which, with short supplies of so many food items, takes on added importance.

Credit is due the British Government for distributing food supplies equitably, Mrs. Dodderidge points out. Food is available to redeem every ration coupon issued, and on rare occasions an additional ration of some commodity is granted, such as the Victory half-pound ration of sugar allowed in July. Preferential rations received by children have contributed much to their growth and alertness. There is no doubt that rationing has given the average English family a better knowledge of nutrition.

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HOME CANNERS CAN SAVE MILLIONS

Homemakers -- with or without a farm or garden -- can still save millions of dollars by preserving and storing food for winter use.

From 18 to 20 million gardeners are producing food for home use, but everyone who preserves some of the current bumper crops will get triple benefits -- in lower food costs, a dependable home food supply, and the satisfaction of helping the national and world food situation.

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